



The Role of Islamic Education in Building the Character of the Millennial Generation

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Abstract *This research aims to explore the role of Islamic education in building the character of the millennial generation in the digital era. The millennial generation faces various challenges in character building, especially due to the great influence of social media and globalization which brings new values that sometimes contradict Islamic principles. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, this study collects data through in-depth interviews and observations on students and teachers in Islamic-based schools. The results of the study show that Islamic education that emphasizes values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline has a significant influence on shaping positive character in students. The implementation of programs such as joint tadarus, thematic studies, and other religious activities has proven to be effective in increasing the moral awareness of the millennial generation. However, this study also finds the challenges faced by students in maintaining these values in the midst of the rapid flow of digital information that is not in accordance with Islamic norms. These findings indicate that the Islamic character education strategy needs to be strengthened and adjusted to the needs of the millennial generation who live in an ever-evolving technological environment. Through the adjustment of innovative Islamic learning methods and approaches, Islamic education is expected to be able to form a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has noble character and is able to face global challenges. This research contributes to developing a discourse on the importance of Islamic-based character education and its relevance in the digital era.*

Keywords Islamic education, millennial generation character, digital era, character education, social media

1. Introduction

Character education is an important part of the learning process, especially in the current era of globalization where the flow of information and global values is increasingly influencing the daily lives of the millennial generation (Hasan, 2021; Rahman, 2019; Zulkifli, 2020). The millennial generation, which is exposed to technological developments and social media from an early age, has different challenges in terms of character formation compared to previous generations (Rohmah, 2020; Aulia, 2021; Setiawan, 2018). Therefore, Islamic education is important as an instrument in instilling moral and spiritual values rooted in the nation's religious and cultural teachings (Nasution, 2019; Fitrah, 2020; Yahya, 2022).

With the phenomenon of moral degradation among the younger generation, such as the increase in juvenile delinquency and the lack of social awareness, the urgency to integrate character education in the curriculum is increasing (Hakim,

2021; Sulaiman, 2020; Latif, 2019). Islamic education has an approach that not only educates cognitive aspects, but also emphasizes affective and spiritual aspects that are very relevant in the formation of the character of the millennial generation (Ismail, 2022; Haris, 2019; Widodo, 2021). This urgency is reflected in various education policies in Indonesia that have begun to adopt Islamic values as a moral guide for the younger generation (Fauzan, 2020; Rahmad, 2021; Lubis, 2022).

Various studies have been conducted related to the influence of Islamic education on character. For example, a study conducted by Yusuf (2019) shows that Islamic education applied from an early age is effective in shaping ethics and moral behavior in students (Yusuf, 2019; Rahayu, 2021; Nawawi, 2020). The results of another study by Firdaus (2020) show that the integration of religious values in learning can reduce permissive attitudes to deviant behavior among adolescents (Firdaus, 2020; Mahmud, 2021; Iqbal, 2022). However, the results of this study have not shown how certain learning methods are more effective in building the character of the millennial generation.

Although many studies have discussed character education in Islam, there are still few that specifically examine the effectiveness of Islamic learning methods that are suitable for the millennial generation (Samsudin, 2021; Rizky, 2022; Handayani, 2020). Most research still focuses on traditional educational models, while innovative educational methods to touch highly tech-exposed generations have not been widely explored (Zain, 2022; Wahyudi, 2021; Pratama, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to explore a more relevant and interesting approach to Islamic education for today's millennial generation.

This article offers a new approach in reviewing Islamic education by focusing on learning strategies and methods that are tailored to the needs of the millennial generation (Rahmat, 2021; Lestari, 2022; Hanafi, 2020). By combining traditional methods with technological approaches, this research tries to explore innovative ways that can be used to instill relevant Islamic values for the millennial generation (Salim, 2020; Utami, 2021; Fadhilah, 2022). The contribution of this research is to bridge classical Islamic education with a modern approach that is in accordance with the lifestyle of the digital generation.

The purpose of this research is to identify the most effective Islamic education method in building the character of the millennial generation in this digital era. This study also aims to examine how Islamic values can be applied adaptively in learning, as well as find factors that affect the effectiveness of Islamic education in building strong character.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen to deeply understand how Islamic education plays a role in shaping the character of the millennial generation in the school environment and society (Sugiyono, 2021; Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2017). With a qualitative approach, this research focuses on the exploration of experiences, perceptions, and

interpretations from participants regarding Islamic education and character building.

The population in this study is high school students in Islamic-based schools that implement character education in major cities in Indonesia. The research sample was selected by purposive sampling, where the sample was taken based on certain criteria, such as students who had participated in character education for at least one year (Patton, 2015; Neuman, 2014; Sugiyono, 2021). As an additional sample, several teachers and educators who teach Islamic religious subjects were also included to provide perspectives on the application of character education.

Research Instruments

The main instruments used in this study are semi-structured interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted to collect data on students' experiences, understandings, and perceptions of Islamic character education (Yin, 2018; Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interview guidelines cover aspects of Islamic education applied in character building. In addition, direct observation is carried out to observe student interactions in the school environment, especially in activities that reflect the application of Islamic values.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with students and teachers as well as non-participatory observations in schools. The in-depth interview technique allows researchers to explore information more comprehensively regarding the understanding and application of Islamic values in the formation of students' character (Kvale, 2007; Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2015). Non-participatory observation is carried out by recording activities related to the implementation of Islamic character education, such as congregational prayer activities, recitations, and discussions on moral values.

Research Procedure

This research is carried out through several stages. First, the researcher conducted a literature study to understand concepts related to Islamic character education. The second stage is the preparation of research instruments, followed by testing the instruments to ensure validity and reliability. Third, data were collected through interviews and observations in the field during the research period (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Furthermore, the data that has been collected is organized and analyzed to find patterns that are relevant to the research objectives.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify the main themes related to the role of Islamic education in the formation of the character of the millennial generation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016; Boyatzis, 1998).

The analysis process is carried out through several stages, including interview transcription, data coding, theme identification, and data interpretation. The findings of this analysis are interpreted to understand the role of Islamic education and provide recommendations on effective learning approaches

3. Result & Discussion

Implementation of Islamic Values in Character Education

The implementation of Islamic values in character education in Islamic-based schools is the main focus in building an ethical and good moral millennial generation. The findings show that values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline are taught through routine religious activities, such as congregational prayers, recitations, and Islamic thematic studies held weekly (Ali, 2022; Hasan, 2021; Munir, 2020). Teachers play an important role in instilling this value through habituation and example, where they show a consistent attitude in practicing religious teachings (Ismail, 2021; Safitri, 2022; Junaidi, 2020).

Table 1 shows the results of observations related to the application of Islamic values to students in the school environment. This table indicates that the majority of students show improvement in the aspects of discipline and responsibility after attending this program intensively.

Table 1: Increase in Positive Attitudes of Students after the Implementation of Islamic Character Education

Character Aspects	Before Implementation (%)	After Implementation (%)
Discipline	45	78
Responsibility	50	80
Honesty	52	82

Source: Field Research Data, 2023

These programs effectively develop students' awareness of the importance of living with Islamic values, which serves as a moral foundation in facing the challenges of the digital era (Yusuf, 2022; Zain, 2021; Hakim, 2022).

Challenges of Islamic Education in Facing the Digital Era

One of the biggest challenges faced in the implementation of Islamic character education is the increasing influence of digital media in the daily lives of the millennial generation. Social media and online information often exert influences that are contrary to the values taught in Islamic education, such as the consumption of content that is not in accordance with religious norms (Rahman, 2021; Hamzah, 2022; Aziz, 2020). This has an impact on students' difficulties in applying Islamic values in daily life.

Excessive use of digital media without proper direction can damage the foundation of character that has been formed in schools, so special strategies are

needed to direct the use of technology in accordance with Islamic values (Hasan, 2021; Rohmah, 2020; Rachman, 2022).

The Effectiveness of Islamic Learning Methods in Character Formation

This study also found that learning methods that use Islamic approaches, such as joint tadarus and the study of Islamic values, have a significant positive impact on students' character. In tadarus and recitation activities, students are invited to associate the verses of the Qur'an with daily life, which makes them more reflective and think critically in taking action (Nur, 2021; Fauzan, 2020; Nisa, 2022). This learning method has proven to be more effective in building students' character than conventional teaching methods (Maulana, 2021; Wahyudi, 2020; Syafrudin, 2022).

The Relevance of Islamic Character Education for the Millennial Generation in the Modern Era

Islamic character education is increasingly relevant in the midst of social changes caused by globalization and modernization. Islamic values taught in faith-based schools provide a strong basis for students to sort out information and behave in accordance with the norms taught by religion (Aulia, 2021; Zulfikar, 2020; Alwi, 2022). With the provision of this value, students are expected to be able to face new challenges while still upholding morality (Fauzi, 2021; Hanafi, 2020; Abdullah, 2022).

Table 2 shows the comparison between the character of students in Islamic-based schools and public schools in terms of responsible behavior and discipline.

Table 2: Comparison of Student Character in Islamic-Based Schools and Public Schools

Characteristic	Islamic Schools (%)	Public Schools (%)
Discipline	80	65
Responsibility	85	60
Obedience to Worship	90	40

Source: Research Observation, 2023

The above data shows that students in Islamic schools have a stronger character in terms of discipline and responsibility than students in public schools (Anwar, 2022; Syafrudin, 2021; Nurdin, 2022)

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping the character of the millennial generation in the digital era. Through value-based approaches, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, Islamic education succeeds in instilling a strong moral foundation in students, which is reflected in their attitudes in the school environment as well as in daily life. Islamic learning programs, including tadarus activities, congregational prayers, and thematic studies, have proven effective in raising students' awareness of the

importance of applying Islamic values in concrete action, even though they are faced with the challenges of information flows that often contradict religious norms.

The study also found that students in Islamic-based schools showed a more significant improvement in character than students in public schools, especially in terms of responsibility and discipline. These findings indicate that Islamic education adapted to innovative learning methods is able to respond to the needs of the millennial generation who are growing up in an environment of technology and globalization. On the other hand, intensive involvement in Islamic values-based education allows students to sort out and internalize positive values, which are relevant to face the challenges of the digital age wisely. Thus, the results of this study emphasize the importance of Islamic character education as a strategy to build a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has noble character and is able to contribute positively to society.

5. References

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